

I thank the sponsors of HB 2357 for initiating the end of OFRI. As an educational assistant, I've seen up close how quickly children take up new ideas, and also how resistant they can be to ideas that run counter to those they are exposed to at home. It's not so different for grown-ups, it seems. Sadly, the drive to check and recheck facts and challenge one's own assumptions is pretty darn low.

This is why I agree with the dismantling/defunding of OFRI, which according to my reading, has created for the public, including school children, misleading materials on our forests. It is bad enough to be careless of facts when you publish information, but OFRI seems to have taken this so far that science has taken a back seat to promotion of the logging industry. Lobbying infractions were not enough to close down this "institute." Let common sense close it down now.

And please assure us, the public, that any institutes supported by public funds in the future will have proved themselves devoted to truth through science. The Citizens' Initiative for Timber Tax Fairness and Clean Drinking Water, LC-829, puts forth better ways to increase the public's understanding for our forest needs, and how healthy forests relate to animal/human life and well-being. Outdoor education for K-12, very popular with kids as far as I've seen, can be permanently mandated and funded via the Department of Ed's Outdoor School Education Fund. LC-829 also advises that the damage done by OFRI in minimizing how our watersheds are hurt by improper logging practices can be corrected by using OFRI funds to support the interaction of the DEQ with the Oregon Forest Practices Act, the Federal Water Pollution control Act and other forest practice and water standard regulations.

It is a demoralizing time for young people learning about our world's problems. All of us, in fact, need to be able to rely on our government and schools to address our natural resources management squarely. No more white washing and no more green washing!